ST. CLAIR COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Preface

This twelfth issue of **Patterns** marks a departure in two ways. In the first place, it is the first issue produced without the directorship of Blanche Redman, who is enjoying an active retirement in her home state of Iowa. And too, this issue marks an attempt at a new format with the use of color.

We express gratitude to the Department of English and the Art Department for their fine cooperation and enthusiasm in producing this twelfth issue of **Patterns.**

And certainly, gratitude must be expressed to the students, day and night, part time and full time, whose interest and hard work this issue of **Patterns** represents.

Judges:

Richard Colwell
Gary Garrett
Judy S. Ogden
Earl Robinette

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For Ione Lautner: Many years of devoted service as a teacher and librarian to the young people and students of the Blue Water area make Miss Lautner worthy of special mention in this issue of **Patterns.**

Miss Lautner has had a vital interest in the development of the expanded library services of our college. Her diligence and hard work, as well as her pioneering spirit and good nature, have helped to make our college library one of the finest.

In our own way, **Patterns** which tries to represent the best in student literary endeavor, wishes to honor Miss Lautner for her many years of devoted service.

short story

David Buffington

Old Dog

by

John Owen

He came slowly into the hall and closed the door firmly behind him. He leaned heavily against the door frame letting his hand linger on the knob. It had been another bad day. His light overcoat, damp from the steady drizzle, was thrown carelessly over other coats hanging in the closet.

Slowly he paced through the hall, across the living room and into the kitchen. From the cupboard he took a nearly full bottle of rye and looked ruefully at the litter of dirty glasses, plates and cutlery that filled the sink. Selecting a glass that appeared less dirty than the others he rinsed it under the tap and gave it a cursory wipe with a soiled tea towel. The bottle and glass were placed on the table. A short step to the refrigerator resulted in a tray of ice cubes. A pan on the table held a bit of water from last night's unused cubes and this was dumped into the sink. The tray was quickly emptied and the pan returned to its place. He poured a long drink and threw in two cubes of ice. Putting the glass to his lips he tilted his head back and drank nearly half of the contents.

Pulling up a chair he sat briefly at the table. Not yet. It was too quiet. A quick sip of rye and he stood again and walked thoughtfully into the living room.

The record cabinet was open and several records and jackets were scattered beneath it and on a chair near by. With some urgency he sorted through the pile. Tonight? With a pause he rejected "The Sound of Music"; that was for nights when he felt that he could climb mountains. Tijuana Brass; too bold, the beat too insinuating. Tonight it would have to be music that crashed like ocean waves on a rocky shore. He picked two; a concerto by Rachmaninoff and one of selections from Wagner. The player came to life and he adjusted the speakers slightly. Turning up the volume he headed back toward the kitchen.

Passing the hall he reached up into the upper portion of the closet. When he returned to the kitchen he was carrying a small army haversack. It dropped gently from his hand to the table and in a moment was replaced by the drink. This time he emptied it.

As the glass was filled for the second time he thought about the war but the thoughts were confused. He took another drink and when the glass was returned to the table, pulled the bag toward him. Undoing the strap he extracted an object wrapped heavily in cloth. He unwound it slowly and with care extracted a large military revolver. He broke the action and looked through the barrel at the ceiling light. Dust, he thought, and perhaps a bit of pitting. That would never do. Stepping to the closet he returned with a small box; a cleaning kit.

It had been a long time since he had used the revolver but his fingers unlatched the cylinder and removed it without fumbling. Shortly after moving into the house he had been asked twice to dispose of neighborhood dogs. The wire brush was dipped into the solvent and he

scrubbed the barrel briskly for a moment. The dogs; two of them, a yappy little pekingese and a big friendly mongrel. With a short rod and a patch of cloth dipped in oil he swabbed the inside of the barrel and each of the chambers in the cylinder. He had hated the little dog. It had lived just two doors away and had always barked at him. The cylinder slid into place and was locked.

The two dogs. When he had taken the little one to the dump to shoot, it had alternately barked and growled at him the entire way. When he stopped and tried to catch it in the car it had bitten him. Angrily he had grabbed it by a front leg and smashed it over the head with the barrel. It twiched in his hand and he had quickly shot it through the neck.

The big dog had been different. It was old and friendly and was more than willing to go in the car with him. He had been embarrassed and had concealed the revolver in his coat pocket from the house to the car. It was quickly stowed under the seat. The dog sat happily in the car and just as joyously jumped out at the end of the trip. During the war he had prided himself in being cool, decisive and efficient. It was only an old dog. The revolver bulged in his pocket as he walked a few yards from the car. The dog alternately sniffed at and wet upon various objects that interested him. It took several minutes until the dog's interest focused upon an object long enough for the man to step up behind him. He held the barrel about an inch from the back of the dog's head, cocked the hammer and fired.

The glass was empty and he slowly refilled it. This time pouring the rye over the ice cubes, he watched them rise nearly to the top of the glass. The music was loud yet in a way soothing. It could probably be heard in the house next door. To hell with them.

Reaching again into the bag he produced a box of cartridges and turned it idly in his hands. 455 Webley — 260 grain bullet. The box opened and a dozen or so of the dull brass and grey lead bullets lay before him. He sipped the drink and his hand put down the box and again raised the gun. He held it fondly. It had a comfortable feel and fitted his hand well. He broke the action and slowly inserted a cartridge into each of the six chambers. He spun the loaded cylinder gently and closed the action with a crisp snap.

The old dog. There were tears of self pity in his eyes. He raised the revolver and stared at its dark efficiency. His hand tightened on the trigger.

Suddenly there was silence. His own breath sounded loud. The record player clicked off. He dropped the gun and pushed it from him. The drink spilled and he watched the ice cubes slip over the side of the table. He was cold and clammy with sweat. He took a short step to the sink and was sick.

How Lucky To Forget

by

Suzanne Torrey

Her hand that had once been creamed daily so that it would stay soft and attractive was now wrinkled and darkened by those brown spots that usually come with age. The nails were no longer gracefully shaped; they were ragged and broken and more than slightly yellow. The hand lay limply on the cool smoothness that she was lying upon. As she woke, her hand began to investigate the sleek area under her fingertips. A dull ache in her abdomen had awakened her. A door slammed; she jumped; the ache was gone. The cool, sleek smoothness was gone too. It was warm and damp. She shifted to the other side so that she wouldn't have to touch the wetness so much.

She listened to a soft voice whisper, "I want to go home. I want to go home. I want to go home. Well you know she's your own mother . . . and to do that to her. Well she's my little girl and I know she will be there but she was the one that was never there — never there but she never said a word." The voice was vaguely familiar, but she listened without really hearing. She had grown so used to its drone that she didn't even hear it anymore. Somehow it always managed to keep her awake anyway.

She opened her eyes and saw nothing. "It's so dark," the voice said. "I'm afraid. Yes, I'm afraid." The warm dampness was cold now but there was no way to keep from touching it. Suddenly it was light and there was something white moving in the room. The voice was still droning on, repeating the same words over and over again. A louder voice beside her grumbled, "I wonder if she'll be wet too. Everybody else was."

"Probably." This sound came from the other side of her. "Have you ever been in here when she wasn't?"

The more familiar voice was still whispering. "But she's my little girl and I want to be there but she's your own mother. Oh, I'm cold; that's too cold."

The heavy warmness that had covered her was suddenly gone. The rhythmic voice kept whispering. "She's wet," the white thing said. "For God's sake shut up, Nina. You're giving me a headache."

The word, Nina, startled her; that was her name. "I give you a headache." The soft voice made the statement into a question.

"You sure do, lady. Jesus, you talk all the time."

She hadn't known that it was her voice whispering. " I talk." Nina's body mumbled.

"You know, she sounds like she might understand what you're saying to her."

"I doubt it. I've been working here for two years, and she hasn't made any sense in all that time. Roll her over there so we can get this wet sheet out from under here. I feel like leaving it for the day girls to change."

Nina felt something pull on her hip, and then she was moving. She felt a dull pain in her arm as if something heavy was lying on it. "Ouch! That hurts — that hurts."

"You've got her right on her arm."

"All right, roll her this way." A sharp tug on her wrist and hip pulled Nina the other way. Nina felt a sense of danger. "Oh, you're going to kill me aren't you?"

The two girls in white laughed. " Every time I come into this room I get a good laugh. Yea, I'm gonna kill you! Cover her up and let's get out of here."

Nina felt the heavy warmness over her again. "Cathy, look who's out of bed!" one of the girls in white giggled.

Cathy demanded sternly, "What are you doing out of bed, Buddy?"

A shaky voice answered, "I was looking for my folks. Have you seen them?"

"Yea, I seen 'em." This was Cathy's voice. "They were here a little while ago, but they left without you."

"They did?" Her voice was even more shaky now — nearly sobbing.

"Buddy, let me see your teddy bear."

"No! He's all I've got left."

"Give him here, you idiot."

"Oh don't hurt him, please. He's all I've got. I've never done anything to you."

"Here, Judy — catch."

"Oh! You're hurting him." Buddy's voice was filled with the pain she felt for the one she loved.

"Come on, Cathy. Give it back, or we'll never get done."

"All right. Come on, Buddy, let's go to bed."

"Don't shove me, I might fall. I don't like you."

"I'm not exactly wild about you either, Honey. Get moving!"

The soft whispering began again. "Moving? I'm not moving anywhere. But she was my little girl. I want to go home."

"There she goes again," Cathy grumbled. "Shut that door so she doesn't wake everybody else up. God, I can't believe that lady."

Nina heard a loud slamming noise and then everything was silent. Even the soft whispering had ceased. Nina was finally able to sleep.

She slept the few hours until dawn. Then sharply at five o'clock came luke-warm water, splashing in her face. "Wake-up Nina." This voice was pleasant. "We'll get you all cleaned up for breakfast. Now your hands. There you are. Now I'll get your little roommate here, and you'll both be done. Ida! Ida, wake up. Come on — let's go into the bathroom." The voices grew softer but Nina could still hear the words.

"Try and pee, sweetie, while I wash your face."

"I can wash my own face, you know." The second voice was so low that Nina could barely hear it.

"Yes, sweetheart, I'm sure you can, but it takes you too long. I've got other patients to do, you know."

"Do you want me to hold the towel for you?"

"I don't really need you to. Now hurry and pee."

The low voice said nothing else. Nina slept again. Something touched her mouth. "Come on, Nina, eat your breakfast." Nina opened her eyes to a hazy beige world and sniffed an odor that reminded her vaguely of eggs. She felt her mouth open automatically; her teeth chew; her throat swallow over and over again until she heard a voice say, "Well, she ate most of it. I doubt if she wants more."

Nina slept again. And then there was someone else. She was awakened by the sound of wheels rolling into the room. Then she felt a gentle touch on her hand. "Hello, Nina." There was no answer. "It's been almost three years since I've seen you. I haven't been able to bring myself to come. Oh, I've rolled by this room many times, but I always was careful to look the other way. I wouldn't have come now, but I've just begun to think that you might need me. You know, none of them even remember when you were a person, Nina. They don't think of the delicate human being you once were; they only see this — this empty shell of a person. Maybe you need someone who remembers."

"Your family finally came — once. But it was too late; you were already gone. They never came back. Mine never does come except on my birthday — like they always did. You must have let yourself wonder why they stopped coming. I try not to; I'm afraid to. I guess you couldn't stop yourself from thinking. That's why you're like you are."

"But maybe you're smarter than I. You don't have to spend those long days waiting anymore. But now I have to wait alone. How wonderful it must feel to forget the waiting and to stop worrying about how soon death will come."

A Simple Story

by

J. Landschoot

It was a difficult process, this forcing my way through the dense woods. Preoccupied with the thought of escaping the treacherous, low-hanging branches of closely spaced trees, I sometimes failed to side-step the numerous potholes that covered the little area left empty by those

trees. Though I think, even if I had two sets of eyes, to avoid the potholes would have been impossible. They were too many, and too well hidden by the underbrush to hope that I could evade them all. And so, I was bantered about, boxed in by trees whose reaching arms slapped and scraped my bared flesh, and brought hard to the ground by the well camouflaged designs of nature.

It had not always been like this. Not the way I remembered it, anyway. The woods had never been so overgrown, the journey never so difficult. But being younger and more agile since last I had ventured here, I imagined my small body must have moved more rapidly then. Age had certainly made the difference.

The denseness of the trees slowly came to an end. Not suddenly the trees separated to engulf a large open area, treeless, but filled to its core with wild blackberry bushes. Disappointment overwhelmed me. Now I knew this place had changed. I had not been mistaken in thinking the woods overgrown. It was the same here. I remembered the wild blackberry patches. They had grown out from the woods, but had only encircled the pit. I saw now that they had conquered it. Tangled and snarled, in what I imagined to be the tulmuts of victory, I hoped that they would choke each other lifeless. How I hated them.

I hung my head and saw that the plants hadn't even left room enough for the sand in which they grew to show itself. The sand. I remembered it. Soft and fine, and showing like gold when the sun hit it.

I knelt down and started uprooting blackberry bushes. Thorny and rough, they ripped my hands, yet I had to feel the sand. But it was a heavy and coarse earth that filled my aching fists. I dropped it.

This wasn't my sandpit. Could it be?

Scrambling to my feet and looking to the far side of the pit, I saw the one object which could remove the doubt from my mind. I moved swiftly toward the big oak that bordered on the pit, its branches shading the blackberry bushes through which I now fought entrance. Reaching it, my shoulder sagged against its coarse covering, and my hand coming to rest on the aged bark sought to discover those objects, important to me beyond my own belief. Knowing where to look, I discovered them almost immediately. I knelt down so I could better see the marks, the initials, fashioned by my boyhood hand. And as I knelt,

I bent myself slowly forward until my forehead rested against the old tree, and I closed my eyes.

I was in a sandpit. Here, the blackberry bushes only circled the pit. And the sand, it was golden and soft, hot when the sun hit it at noon, but warm like a bath in the evening.

And then I saw myself, mouth and hands stained with blackberry juice, and overall cuffs filled with the sand that had gathered there after I had run barefoot across the hot sand from one patch of berries to another.

And I saw my young body rolling in the warm sand, sometimes burying myself beneath sandy dunes, sometimes trying to build castles

and castle walls that were never built because the fine sand wouldn't hold together.

Finally, I saw the small hands that carved the initials DJ into the bark of an old oak, and I saw the same small hands cross the boy's heart and heard the boy's heartbroken promise, "I'll come back again. I'll come back." Weeping, the boy bent slowly forward until his forehead rested against the tree, and he closed his eyes.

My eyes were wet when I opened them. Slowly I lifted my bowed head. I felt my forehead and fingered the initials that had been imprinted there.

Before Everything Happens . . . . .

by

Nancy Young

Can we go on as we are?

Can we be as one? Ever?

Can we face what is ahead?

Are we what we think?

Are we for a life of beauty?

Are we existing?

Will we part?

Will we live on? Or

Will we be demolished?

BEFORE EVERYTHING HAPPENS . . . ?

Fragments

by

John Owen

No. I

An ash tray

Filled with cigarette butts

And gum wrappers

Deposited by unknown hands

Residue of the world

A Growing Thing

by

Myrna L. M. (Mickey) Turnbull

Do you remember when we met, my love,
I looked into your eyes
and knew
That the duration of my life
I'd like to spend with you.

That Fall was made for us —
Nature's glorious setting was unreal.
The regal trees stretched high above the earth
With outstretched arms of blazing red and burnished gold
While we became oblivious to all,
Walking barefoot through the silky sands,
Exploring,
Laughing,
Sharing secrets,
Finding each other and falling in love.
And with impatience and impetuosity of youth
We held each other close and said
We could not wait for leaves to fall —
And life to pass us by —
And precious love to die.
We pledged our love and took our vows,
Exultant in our new-found gift.

Do you remember the growing pains, my love,
Learning to nurture our gift and make it grow,
The petty arguments, the making up,
Juggling the budget to go to see a show —
And how we'd lie in bed, each feigning sleep
When in the night we heard our baby cry,
And how grudgingly the loser trod
Barefoot across the floor
To gaze in wonder at this noisy babe,
Extension of humanity.
The small cares are forgotten
As a universal truth unfolds,
Loving is a giving thing,
The more one gives,
The more it grows.

poetry

Richard Weinert

Life

by

John Owen

A small candle
Burning in a darkness
Extending forever

Out of nothing
Going nowhere
Soon over and forgotten

Planned in whimsy
Organized for folly
Briefly illuminated

A small light
A short time
A dark nothing

November Reflection

by

Eva M. Kromer

Bitter November with grey dominating the days
Depressing the limits of emotions felt.
Oh bitter month with nothing in its days.
The wind lashing as steel at naked trees,
The rain, cold with the touch of winter —
Yet to come,
Dominate the days numbered and called November.
Bitter November —
Acid with the smoke of leaves
Like the caves of the eternal Hades,
In the seemed foreverness of its days.

---

by

Terri McPharlin

Vain efforts are a part of me
Successlessness has found me
But failure cannot surround me
for with rose in fist
and grin on teeth
i indulge in life

We Did Start

by

Nancy Young

1. Years ago probably less
We
did
I suppose . . .
start.
But
who
said for
real
we started??
It was true in life
We were good — we
did
start.
Together we could do . . .
anything.
It was
real —
Everything was there . . .
All
but
me.

2. Meeting only when
friends
brought together . . .
us.
I guess . . . we
did
start.
We
were
real . . . really real.
How long
could
a
wish last??
How much
did
we
want
it to
last??
Forever I suppose??
(BUT THAT'S
ALL.)

critical essay

Albert Young

Stephen Crane – The Red Badge of Courage

by

Myrna Turnbull

> The men dropped here and there like bundles. The captain of the youth's company had been killed in an early part of the action. His body lay stretched out in the position of a tired man resting, but upon his face there was an astonished and sorrowful look, as if he thought some friend had done him an ill turn. (Crane, p. 43.)

wrote Stephen Crane, in **The Red Badge of Courage,** (1895), described as an episode of the American Civil War, a novel which became the cornerstone of the "new realism" in American fiction, establishing Crane as a brilliant historian of war and mankind. (Geismar, p. 82.)

Crane had a burning need to write about the things which touched him deeply in his short and tortured life. This urgency can be felt particularly strongly in his war epic, **The Red Badge of Courage.** From the reading, this author feels that Crane senses his own mortality, he has a need to observe, feel and record the vividness of life around him as one seeing it for the last time. Crane epitomizes the youth movement of today as he portrays the ugliness and futility of battle and the unpredictability of man's character when he is faced with a situation demanding a show of courage. Crane implies that man becomes a hero through the chance factors of his emotions at a given time. This empathy that is felt for young Henry in **The Red Badge of Courage** can be felt also for the young men of today who serve in Vietnam. Involved in a war which seemingly has no cause, these men are also part of a "blue demonstration" men without identity who are forced into guerrilla warfare. As young Henry became a hero, we can wonder at the chance factor that made Lieutenant Calley, Jr., a villain in Vietnam.

An American writer, Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey and educated at Lafayette College and Syracuse University. (Foerster, p. 1244.)

The chronology by Ames Williams and Vincent Starrett states that he was the fourteenth child of the Reverend Jonathan Townley and Mary Helen (Peck) Crane. (Geismer, p. 70.)

Scholastically, Crane was not a success because he found that routine assignments bored him. He considered the study of a remote subject such as European History a waste of time when he could walk along the Erie Canal or through the Central Railway station or into the police court to study humanity. (Franchere, p. 9.) However, by probing into the realities of life, Crane inflicted intense personal suffering upon himself.

In one of his glimpses at the commonplace, the seamy side of life, Crane saw a brawny policeman drag a wailing street-urchin (age eleven or twelve years) into court by his dirty collar. Crime: Hitting the policeman with a stone encased in a snowball; Punishment: Five days in jail on a subsistence of bread and water while the rats nibbled at him and scurried about his cell. (Franchere, p. 9.) Thus, the subject of life gnawed at the insides of Crane, driving him to record it as it was in actuality.

His quest for realism took him on a Mexican adventure where he decided to hire a guide and go into the mountains in search of the bandit "Ramon Colorado", for to write of a bandit one must study the fibre of the man. Crane, when trapped in a cave by Colorado, felt hypnotized by a vicious monster; later, he would see Colorado as a "grovelling desperado" captured by the Rurales. The incident accentuated a universal truth — "The great bandit was like everyone else — a brave man when there was nothing to fear, but capable of running from danger to save his skin. Like Henry Fleming of **The Red Badge of Courage.** Like Stephen Crane too. (Franchere, p. 9.)

Crane's brilliant psychological representation of a boy's first battle experience is wholly an imaginary construction as the author had never been involved with the Military. Crane's **Red Badge of Courage** is the first novel to strip war of all romance and meaning and, instead, to display war in a more realistic light. (Foerster, p. 1244.)

On the surface, **The Red Badge of Courage** is the simple tale of a young soldier in the Union Army in the Civil War, who becomes frightened at the prospect of facing battle for the first time, but he gradually recovers as the book advances. The story deals with the agonies which Henry faces such as his isolation from other human beings; (he constantly soul-searches for some small clue as to whether he will be cowardly or brave in the face of battle and wonders if the other new recruits have the same feelings), his confrontations with death; (he is unable to pass the corpse in the natural chapel), his lack of self-identity; (he is part of a blue demonstration). The army commanders do not see the enlisted men as individuals, rather, they are part of a huge machine which will annihilate the enemy.

Although Henry Fleming (the youth) is the main character, the book seems to have two settings. The physical setting is the army camp on the side of the hill where the soldiers argue and interact with one another. We see a second setting in the mind of the youth. His impressions of the setting around him, his feelings, the war around him, death, the depersonalization of the army, his romantic ideas of what war was really like, are recorded throughout the book. For example, he had an early idea that war was one great and glorious conflict, an idea gained from his readings and the glorified tales of old veterans. In reality he finds war a "long blue demonstration" the marching army are "moving monsters" and the soldiers are "huge, crawling reptiles." Through graphic imagery Crane depersonalizes the army and makes them part of a moving insect in keeping with the impressionistic method of presenting a scene colorfully.

Crane's writing technique is a rather complex thing to define. His vocabulary is simple, and he depicts his characters through southern dialect as illustrated in the scene where Henry's mother warned him about the perils of the outside world:

> "an allus be careful an' choose yer comp'ny. There's lots of bad men in the army Henry. The army makes 'em wild, an' they like nothing better than the job of leading off a young feller like you, as ain't never been away from home much and has allus had a mother, an' a-learning 'em to drink and swear." (Crane, p. 15.)

The limited humor is injected into his book through the dialogues of the soldiers:

> "There was some grim rejoicing by the men! By thunder, I bet this army'll never see another new regiment like us!
> You bet!
>
> A dog, a woman, an' a walnut tree,
> Th' more yeh beat 'em th' better they be!"
> (Crane, p. 101.)

Crane sticks to simple vocabulary in his narrative and descriptive techniques, creating colorful imagery of the army as it moves:

> The blue smoke-swallowed line curled and writhed like a snake stepped upon. It swung its ends to and fro in an agony of fear and rage. (Crane. p. 99.)

and

> a moment later the regiment went swinging off into the darkness. It was now like one of those moving monsters wending with many feet. The air was heavy and cold with dew. A mass of wet grass, marched upon, rustled like silk. (Crane, p. 23.)

and

> At nightfall the column broke into regimental pieces and the fragments went into the fields to camp. Tents sprang up like strange plants. Camp fires, like red, peculiar blossoms, dotted the night. (Crane, p. 25.)

To me, the name of Stephen Crane is synonomous with fine imagery; he writes "word pictures." Throughout the book he contrasts nature's serenity to the fury of the battlefield.

Although Crane is most popularly considered a realistic writer, naturalism, realism and impressionism are tightly interwoven in his war epic.

Naturalism, an extreme form of realism, is the literary movement which holds that all existent phenomena are in nature and, thus, within the sphere of scientific knowledge. This school maintains that no supernatural realities exist. (Beckson & Ganz, p. 132.)

Crane conceives of naturalism as a theory of fiction approaching life with a detached, objective, almost scientific outlook. It portrays man as a helpless and insignificant creature who acts according to his instincts as a response to his environment. Man, a puppet at the mercy of physical conditions, cannot exercise free will or individual intelligence to any great extent. Nature, not being a person with attitudes and feelings, is serene and indifferent to the troubles of mankind. It is the natural environment and the physical force which surrounds man. Crane constantly repeats the idea that man loses his identity in the collective regimental personality by depicting the military units as insects or machines. Henry would like to run from the front but he cannot because of his inability to use free will.

> He saw instantly that it would be impossible for him to escape from the regiment. It enclosed him and there were iron laws of tradition and iron law on four sides. He was in a moving box. (Crane, p. 30.)

The Red Badge of Courage is considered a realistic novel, realism being the type of literary composition which attempts to portray life as it actually exists.

The realist, wishing to record life as it really is, refrains from imposing a predetermined pattern upon his materials and allows the story to tell itself — for truth resides in the events themselves rather than in the author's imagination. (Beckson & Ganz, p. 170.)

The author describes what an ordinary private experiences and thinks during a two-day battle. Upon entering the army Henry is drilled endlessly and his main concern is to keep warm and to get enough to eat. In the battle he experiences fear and fatigue and faces death. In keeping with the concept of realism the soldiers are portrayed with their battle fatigue, dry throats and burning eyes as they accomplish their heroic deeds with much awkwardness. The soldiers swear when they are shot and death is portrayed in its ghastly reality in the description of the corpse in the natural chapel, one of Crane's finest pieces of description.

> He was being looked at by a dead man who was seated with his back against a columnlike tree. The corpse was dressed in a uniform that once had been blue but was now faded to a melancholy shade of green. The eyes, staring at the youth, had changed to the dull hue to be seen on the side of a dead fish. The mouth was open. Its red had changed to an appalling yellow. Over the gray skin of the face ran little ants. One was trundling some sort of bundle along the upper lip. (Crane, p. 53.)

The impressionistic technique centres on the mental life of the chief character rather than on the reality around him, dwelling on the character's memories and associations and inner emotion reactions. (Beckson & Ganz, p. 88.) Crane depicts scenes, characters and moods as visualized at a particular moment rather than as found in reality. He selects the colors of nature which will reinforce his moods. For instance, nature has a tranquillizing effect on a corner of the battlefield:

> The youth felt a flash of astonishment at the blue, pure sky and the sun-gleamings on the trees and fields. It was surprising that nature had gone tranquilly on with her golden process in the midst of so much devilment. (Crane, p. 45.)

The author also tends to use his colors symbolically. Red, for instance, is suggestive of the bloody wounds of battle and the emotions of war.

> They were going to look at war, the red animal — war, the blood-swollen God. (Crane, p. 64.)

and, as in the case of the death of Jim Conklin, one who died courageously in battle, red symbolizes death:

> The red sun was pasted in the sky like a (fierce) wafer. (Crane, p. 64.)

The final sentence in the book reflects the awakening maturity of the youth, Henry Fleming, who is now at peace with himself and nature:

> Over the river a golden ray of sun came through the hosts of leaden rain clouds. (Crane, p. 134.)

Crane used the effect of a universal character such as the tall soldier, the youth, the loud soldier, etcetera, later interchanging these titles with the names of the characters to the extent that it jarred and confused this reader. It was the only effect that did not blend homogeneously into his "total" picture.

The relaxed narrative and easy readability of Crane's epic tends to belie his remarkable talent. One does not always appreciate at the first reading the skill and complexity of Crane's writing style. He delicately balances realism, impressionism and naturalism to give a "total" effect. The realism of the war scenes would dull the senses if it were not relieved by the contrast of impressionism, the thoughts and emotions of the youth. Crane adds beauty to his tale through naturalistic impressions such as Henry's amazement that nature could remain untouched by the surrounding horrors of war. The combined styles of realism and impressionism provide a vehicle for Crane to explore disconnected segments of the battlefield for a panoramic view; the written word makes the reader see, feel and hear, becoming totally immersed in the war experience.

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Thanksgiving

by
John Owen

I watched him
Stuffing down
Mashed potatoes and gravy
Pie and ice cream
And thought
Of thousands of
Scrawny fingers
Scraping frantically
At the bottom
Of an empty
Grain sack

Sara Lee Hobson

personal essay

Marcia Albert

Confessions of a Career Dropout

by

Dorothy Zahrt

I guess it was a question from my daughter that started the whole thing.

"What are you going to be when you grow up, Mom?"

"Well, I am grown up and I'm, I'm . . . me."

"Yeah, I know that but that's a somebody. I mean a something. You know like a flying nurse or a fireman." (She plans to go into the Air Force.)

"I did want to be a circus performer once," I said slowly. That brought a giggle.

"You in leotards and a ballet outfit," she laughed behind her hand.

I knew better than to continue at that point. She'd never understand how enthralled I'd been by the performers who jumped and tumbled and yelled enthusiastically, flipping each other through the air like so many pizzas. I can remember preparing for the grand finale by rigging an upturned kitchen table and a 2x10 as a teeter-totter. For lack of a better partner I'd had to settle for balancing a clump of cement on one end. This killed a little of the act's spontaneity, but at least I was the star — or so I thought. I intended to jump on one end of the balanced board and the clump, suitably decked out in pink ripple ribbon, was to sail gracefully through the air above my head.

Actually, as it turned out, the cement clump had been harboring all sorts of resentment. For no sooner had I jumped with a cry of "Shezam!" then the rock hurtled through the air smacking me full-force in the mouth. I ended up picking ripple ribbon out of my teeth. That was the end of the circus and archeology too.

"What else did you want to be, Mom?" She asked this with an air of expectance I was was beginning to resent.

"I was a pretty good ice skater," I replied. "It probably came naturally to me because my parents were from Canada."

"I know," she said, "that's why you call it porridge instead of oatmeal."

I could see I was going to get no sympathy here. It would be inconceivable to her that I could end a promising figure skating career by stepping hip deep into a muskrat hole near the pond and spraining my knee.

"What happened?" she asked.

"I over-estimated my cultural advantage," I replied. That stopped her momentarily.

"Weren't you going to be a teacher or something once?" She was at it again.

"I thought about it." I was getting cagier. No sense telling her how I'd changed my mind about that one. I'd always enjoyed sports and the out-of-doors so physical education seemed a likely field for me. However, my youthful enthusiasm for the wholesomeness of that life was squelched when I learned that our gym teacher moonlighted as "Bonnie the Bouncing Wonder", star burlesque queen. You had to hand it to her, at least she stayed in the area of physical education. I'd always wondered about those bikini gym shorts.

"Weren't there counselors to help you decide?" Now it was my husband. He's a junior high school principal and a great believer in the power of education.

"In junior high we did take aptitude tests," I replied. "But mine weren't very conclusive." I wasn't about to tell him that my centiles didn't match.

The way the counselor explained it was with a sort of graph. Mine looked like a map of the Indian Ocean with math ability at about 20 fathoms and several lesser abilities slightly above sea level. Towering gloriously above it all with its head just below the clouds was my score in mechanical ability.

I felt bad about it for a while. No girl likes to think of spending the rest of her life with dirty fingernails and dressed in greasy overalls. I figured if worse came to worse I could always put plastic cars together in a toy factory. The counselor took it much worse, however, for when I walked out he was murmuring, "99th centile in mechanical aptitude" and "score grids, score grids."

"There are tests to see what you like to do, you know." This was my husband again. His faith in counseling seemed unshakable.

"Oh, those are the ones with the pins," I said.

"Pins?"

I could see he was beginning to see what we were up against. "Yes," I said, "we had a test like that and everyone was given a special little thing to punch out holes with. Maybe it wasn't a pin — more like a little nail."

"Well, what were the results?"

"It all turned out o.k. in the end," I said hedging.

"What does that mean?"

I hesitated. How did we get on this subject anyway. Here I am, I thought, I do the washing, cook the meals, go to church, and help with Brownies and I'm being scrutinized like I was un-American.

My husband's face was sheer puzzlement. He's waiting for an answer, I realized.

"You see we were all in this room and we had 45 minutes or something to complete the test. Everyone was given the test and a pin and I misplaced my pin. Oh, it was awful." I said remembering the

counselor's icy stare and the ticking of the clock as I searched frantically for the pin. "I finally found it though, and managed to punch out as many holes as anyone else," I joked.

Nobody laughed. And my husband's look of puzzlement had switched to disbelief. I didn't tell him but the counselor had explained later that I might enjoy a job as an institutional groundskeeper. Which explains why I enjoy keeping house, I guess.

"You took college prep in school. Didn't someone counsel you then?" He was still hanging in there.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I was assigned the average counselor."

"What do you mean by that?"

"She got all the students who were college bound but hadn't made the National Honor Society. She was full of empathy or, maybe it was pity. On the basis of my I.Q. test she promised me B's and C's in college — which was a great relief to me.

My husband's shoulders were sagging by now and my daughter had left the room in favor of watching "Hazel" reruns.

He's resigned to the fact that I'll never make it, I thought as he grabbed a beer out of the refrigerator and walked to his favorite chair. I sighed happily as I set the table for dinner. Someday I'd go back and let them try to make me into something. But, for now I'd just enjoy being somebody.

Why Does the Mexican Child Have to Pay the Price for Not Being White?

by

Hannah Zetzer

Psychic space provides each of us with the mental room he needs in order to be himself. But there are many who will not provide this psychic space for others due to fear, ego, or prejudice. Those who are denied the chance to feel and live freely, suffer much. Especially those who are not white. The experience of the Mexicans living in the United States is an example of this denial of psychic space.

The problem of the migrant child, as well as all Mexican children, is a very real and painful one. It encompasses his place in society, why he is there, how it affects him, and how it will change. Just where is the migrant child's place? Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, in their essay "Making Psychic Space for One Another," say that:

> . . . we think of the child of migrant parents, dragged from school to school, from one area of ripening crops to another: (as) a child who never stays long enough in any one classroom to feel easy with what is expected of him, nor long enough on any playground to make friends — so that he can feel confident

> that where two or three are gathered together, they will spontaneously widen their circle to include him if he runs to join them. He is the outsider against whom, intentionally or thoughtlessly, the other children keep their circle closed.

This puts the migrant child in an inferior, unaccepted position. But why is he put in this position? Most people might say that it is mainly because he is a stranger. That is a very safe, reassuring answer, but it is not necessarily true. There are many migrants in the area I am from, Sanilac County, who have lived there long enough to be permanent members of the community. In other words, they have now settled. Yet they are still placed in this awkward, cruel position and their children suffer for it. Most migrants are Mexican, as are those in Sanilac County. They are different in color, culture, and in most cases, educational development and are therefore not accepted. Their culture is looked down on, and their lack of proper education is not taken for what it is, but rather is considered to be stupidity and natural slowness.

The white community children know no other way to treat migrant and local Mexican children than the way their parents treat these so-called outsiders. And in many cases these parents do not treat the Mexicans and their children as equal or as people to be associated with. However, the bad example of the parents is not as bad as that of the teachers. My illustration will be a special education program for migrant children and a concurrent Federal Title One program for local residents which were conducted during the past summer. The children were intermixed at meals only. I have been given to understand by a few year-round teachers that similar situations and attitudes hold true during the regular school year. Picture, if you will, a gymnasium with oblong lunch tables. Along the wall where the stage is, is a rather small counter where food is passed out. There is a line of Title One children who are all white and are supposed to be underprivileged. Some of the ones who have already gone through the line are eating on the stage where none of the children are supposed to be. Others are racing to get in line. The Title One teachers are all seated, calmly watching everything until the migrant children arrive, a few running as the Title One children have done. Immediately, two or three of these teachers are on their feet, yelling at the Mexicans, telling them to go back to their rooms, which happen to be in another building. They were then told to **walk** on their return. The migrant teachers can do nothing because they are trying to teach the children that all teachers are to be obeyed outside of the classroom. This type of incident can do nothing but make the Mexican child wonder why the white child is allowed to get away with all that he does, while he, the Mexican, is not so allowed. It isn't long before he realizes that he is considered inferior, nor is it long before he believes himself to be. It also becomes evident to the white child that the Mexican is to be treated differently.

I had a friend who was Mexican and also worked in the migrant program. From her I learned that after much such abuse, and through constant demands that they speak English continually, the Mexican children, both settled and migrant, become ashamed of their heritage, their language, and their parents. They become wary of attempts at friendship by whites and, in certain cases, out and out rebels against those other than their own kind.

Luckily, many Mexicans learn to ignore any prejudices and refuse to accept this treatment as a correct judgment of their intelligence, abilities, and characters. However, my friend expressed great hate and discomfort at the attitudes of those who are prejudiced. She **knew** she was not inferior, but she could not ignore the fact that others thought she was. She was disgusted with seeing her relatives, friends, and other members of her race being treated shabbily. I could see for myself that what she said was true, and believe me, I burned. Such ignorance and lack of understanding was enough to make me ashamed that I was white! These children are no different than any others and are no less intelligent. Their problem lies in the attitude of others and in the lack of proper education due to this attitude, besides continual moving. But when I stop and try to find a way to change these ignorant prejudices, I see only one real possibility. I know that I cannot change anothers viewpoint, although I can present reasons for such a change and urge that it be pursued. Therefore, all that is left is for me to provide as much of that understanding and so-called "psychic space" as I possibly can.

Progressions

by

Daniel Kivel

I

The scarlet light begins to feign, and dies
Impaled on the sword of cloudy skies.

II

The starlight shimmers, falling down among
The narrow rows of fallen leaves,
Who stand to guard the tiger lilies hung
In garlands draped along the eaves.

III

The moonglow flows within the shallow haunt
And creeps along the path among the stars;
It floats, a river of butter, to flaunt
A thousand little men with their glass jars
From catching the essence of magic found
Around the haunt, which sits upon the sound.

IV

The morning rises over the hilltop
And I pass through the portals of my mind,
Turning to stare, but not to ever stop
Illusions in their mad, mid-morn charade.
The fog engulfs reality to find
Cause for the monatomic masquerade,
While all the world waits in its confusion
To learn the truth of the elusive illusion.

V

High in the tree Marlowe's melodious
Birds sing their madrigals in complete tune
With every wisp of wind, or odious
Gust of disaster filled with rainy ruin,
Or the babble of the brook, or its
Murmer, or its sparkle. Searching his tune,
I find it so much filled with loving fits
That it is not hard for me to assume
That he feels that his mate in her nest soon
Will uncover the world's only boon.

VI

The mountain climbing sun has reached the peak,
And therein lies so much philosophy
That it would do no ill to ponder it.
How many times in each day do I seek
The answer to the question, "What will be?"?
How very often do I stop and sit
With seer, scholar, saint, or sage to learn
The truth, the future, or the moral right?
How often have I heard the ancient tune
Which tells me that I should begin to spurn
My teachers, for the single truth is: Night
Will return, and there will be one more noon.

VII

After noon, the preparation comes,
For preparation is the only aim
In nature's way. The preparation numbs
The pain of boredom in a worn out game.
So, as the sky turns red, the drowsiness
Comes to the creatures who will sleep the night
Within the bounds of their true love's caress,
And with the gentle fading of the light
A certain type of creature stirs within
His den, for what is night to us is day,
And what is day to us is night to him.
The preparation is, in nature's way,
Complete, and the amber light, bleeding, dies
Impaled on the sword of cloudy skies.

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